



Illustration by Janet Wingate

SOLIDAGO PTARMICOIDES **PRAIRIE ASTER**

Prairie Aster is a perennial with stems that are 10-70 cm high and clustered on a woody-thickened, branched rootcrown. Leaves are alternate, glabrous, firm, and 3-veined. The narrowly lance-shaped leaves near the base of the plant have entire margins and are petiolate and up to 20 cm long, while those on the upper stem are shorter, strap-shaped, and lacking petioles. The 3-60 flower heads are borne in an open, flat-topped inflorescence. The glabrous, overlapping involucre bracts of each head are 5-7 mm long, each with a greenish apex and a prominent, thickened midrib. The 10-25 rayflowers are white and 5-9 mm long, and the numerous disk flowers are white. The achene is glabrous and has a pappus of bristles that are thickened toward the top. Flowering August-September.

This species differs from other *SOLIDAGO* in having white flowers, resembling an *ASTER*. It can be distinguished from the latter by its flat-topped inflorescence, its thickened, involucre bracts that are often blunt at the tips, the thickened pappus bristles, and 3-veined leaves.